

# CHANDAMAMA

JULY 1984

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## NEXT ISSUE

- \* *Two Encounters—in Story of Krishna*
- \* *The Dream—A legend of India*
- \* *Who was Shakespeare?—A Mystery unsolved*
- \* *Two Deceived Twice—An Arabian Night Story*
- \* *The Resurgent India—in Story of India*
- \* *Treasure Island — A Pictorial Story*
- \* *And all the features like Newsflash, Let Us Know, Do You Know, and a bunch of delightful stories*

### Thoughts to be Treasured

**"Hatred is not essential for nationalism. Race hatred will kill the real national spirit."**

**—Mahatma Gandhi**

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**AND Newsflash, Do You Know, Let Us Know and More.**



# CHANDAMAMA

Controlling Editor: NAGI REDDI  
Founder: CHAKRAPANI

## THE NEW CONTEST

We are delighted at the response to our invitation to story-tellers announced in this page in our February issue.

We have a large stack of entries at the expiry of the date for submission. The results will be announced soon.

In the meanwhile we invite the budding writers to try their hands at an *original humorous story*. Yes, original they should be, not old ones retold. To be original, they should emerge out of your imagination. If they are based on experience or true happenings, then also they are original, provided the experience or happening has not been published before.

Please send your entries (within 250 to 500 words) to reach the Editor, Chandamama (English), Madras 600 026, by or before the end of August '84. Your magazine will be happy to send a reward of Rs. 100.00 for the best entry. Any other entry selected for publication will also be suitably rewarded.



आत्मोपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।

सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥

*Atmaupamyena sarvatra samam paśyati yo'rjuna*

*Sukham vā yadi vā duḥkham sa yogī paramo mataḥ*

He who sees himself in all, and all as equal, in pleasure or in pain, he is considered the perfect yogin, O Arjuna.

— *The Bhagavad Gita*



## LET US KNOW

***What is Ashoka Pillar? Where is it to be found?***

—Suman Prasad. Patna.

The Ashoka Pillar, cut out of pale orange sandstone, dates back to 3rd century B.C. On its brightly polished surface can be seen seven edicts of Emperor Ashoka, in Brahmi script.

It is now in the old Firozabad area of Delhi. Firoze Shah Tughlaq brought it from Topra, near Meerut, in the 14th century.

***Where from does the phrase "Home, sweet home" come?***

—Jenifer, Quilon.

This was a line in a song written by John Howard Payne. The song was presented in 1823 in a London theatre, put to music by Sir Henry Bishop.

***Can glass ever decompose simply being exposed to nature?***

—(Miss) Roma Subramanian, Andheri

Yes, but in more than a million years. For that matter it will take 3000 years for plastic wrappers to decompose.

***What is the rarest dog in the world?***

—Kumar Modi, Ahmedabad.

Lowchen or "lion dog". Only a few are there, mostly in the U.K.

***Readers are welcome to send such queries on culture, literature or general knowledge which should be of interest to others too, for brief answers from the Chandamama.***

# Do You Know?

All pre-historic dinosaurs were not gigantic. Some were of the size of chicken!



Every human being has some defunct muscles in him or her. They were once used to flap our ears at will. However, Marie Louise, wife of Napoleon Bonaparte, had the remarkable ability to move her ears and even turn them inside out at will!

Dolphins sleep with one eye open.



Beethoven composed most of his famous pieces of music after he had grown deaf.

Belief in the existence of ghosts is most widespread in England.



# NEWS- FLASH

## An Example

The chief judge of the Santa Fe Court (New Mexico) was late by 5 minutes in arriving at the court. He fined himself fifty dollars.



## Are There Mermaids?

People of the coastal area of New Guinea believe that mermaids and mermen live in their neighbouring sea. They call these creatures *Ri*. The upper part of any of these creatures is like that of a human being, the lower part like that of a fish. After long interviews with the local people who claim to have seen them, anthropologist Roy Wagner of the University of Virginia tends to believe them. "There could be a species unknown to science—say some other scientists"



## The "Sun-Ric"

Indian scientists have succeeded in making a cycle-rickshaw that can be driven by solar power. This is one of the several enterprising efforts by the Indian scientists with solar energy as the asset.



## Warning From Water

Who do you think is going to tell us when the water in the river or the lake or the tank is polluted? A trout fish. According to a French experiment, the fish have a keen smell-sense. A handy pollution alarm fitted on a trout's head will send its own brain vibrations to a computer. It can inform which of several pesticides and herbicides is polluting the water down to ten-billionth of a gram per litre.



*(Story so far: Krishna met the Pandavas at the court of Panchala where Arjuna won the hand of Princess Draupadi in marriage. The Pandavas were till then moving in disguise to avoid the wrath of their cruel cousins, the Kauravas.)*

## THE HUNGRY GOD OF FIRE

**A** rjuna's triumph at the court of Panchala created a sensation. Who were these valiant young men, looking like simple Brahmins, but capable of keeping a militant crowd of kings at bay?—the people wondered.

Their curiosity soon unravelled the truth. Thousands of people—princes, sages, the nobility

and the common folks—rejoiced at the news that the Pandavas had not gone up in smoke along with the house of lac at Varanavrata. They were alive and as spirited as they used to prove themselves in the tournaments at Hastinapura.

At Hastinapura the news created three different reactions:





The Kauravas were shocked, for the Pandavas had not only escaped death, but had made a glorious alliance with the royal house of Panchala! What was worse, Duryodhana himself was among the candidates seeking Draupadi's hand and who, like the rest, had miserably failed to snatch the bride from the winner's hand!

Among the nobility and the commoners the reaction was one of relief and joy. They really loved those five brave brothers.

The only person whose feeling was different from both these was the blind king, Dhri-

tarashtra. He was embarrassed. It was at his bidding that the Pandavas had taken abode at Varanavrata. Their reported death in the fire had naturally saddened him. At the same time he had felt some satisfaction at the thought that his own boys were now without rivals!

Now the old king was obliged to send messengers welcoming the Pandavas back home.

The Pandavas returned to Hastinapura in the company of Krishna with whom they had struck a very sweet friendship. Dhritarashtra of course received them with a show of warmth, but he did not fail to take note of two things, even though he was blind. First, the people of Hastinapura were agog with excitement at the return of the Pandavas. Secondly, the Kauravas, though lying low for the time being, were getting ready to start a strife any moment.

The two camps ought to be kept separate, thought the old king.

He announced that the Pandavas were entitled to half of the kingdom. But they must found their capital away from Hastinapura—on the swampy outskirts of a forest known as

the Khandava.

The site allotted was not at all a pleasing one. The forest of Khandava had become notorious as the home of ogres, demons, ghosts and numerous other elements hostile to men. They were not likely to take kindly to the Pandavas building a town in their neighbourhood. Also, it was not easy to create a castle and a colony in a jungle. However, under Krishna's inspiration, the Pandavas began the work.

Help came from an unexpected quarter. One day, while Krishna and Arjuna relaxed under a tree, a bright-looking being with knotted locks look-

ing like a Brahmin ascetic approached them.

"I am hungry. Will you please help me satisfy my hunger?" he asked.

"What would you like to have?" asked Krishna.

Waving his arms at the wide forest, he said, "This alone would satisfy me."

Krishna understood that the hungry stranger was none other than the God of Fire. There was no other way to destroy the wicked lot hiding in the forest than to destroy the whole forest. But the fire was unable to lick it, despite several earlier attempts to do so, because it was protected by God Indra.





"We are willing to help you consume the forest. But we do not have adequate weapons to protect you in case you are attacked," said Arjuna.

The God of Fire fetched from Varuna a wonderful bow, named the Gandiva, a weapon that was to be Arjuna's life-long companion and help him win many a crucial battle.

Assured of protection, the God of Fire at once swooped down upon the forest and burst into a million flames. The deafening sound of the rocks exploding in the forest alerted Indra. He sent huge rain-clouds which began to melt on the

burning forest. But arrows from Arjuna's newly acquired bow, charged with supernatural power, dispersed the clouds or drove them into the distant horizons.

Indra's mighty elephant, Airabhata, began pouring water on the forest. At his trumpeting, hundreds of elephants lined up along the river Yamuna and filling their trunks with water, discharged it on the flames.

The battle between the flames and the torrents went on for days. Undaunted, the fire continued feeding on the forest. The ogres, demons and numerous other creatures got killed, but not those who remembered God or took refuge with Krishna and Arjuna. Among such lucky ones was Mayadanav, a genius architect and sculptor, though a demon. He was temporarily camping in the forest. Arjuna extended to Mayadanav his hand of friendship.

After fifteen days the God of Fire, completely satisfied with his meal, withdrew his flames and took leave of Krishna and Arjuna. Krishna too left for Dwaraka.

Mayadanav, grateful to Arjuna for his friendliness and

hospitality, began building a majestic palace for the Pandavas. When it was complete, people could not but marvel at it, for such craftsmanship had never been known before.

Many flocked to see the wondrous building and they settled down around it. With the fearful forest gone, the place had become safe. The capital of the Pandavas, bearing the name Indraprastha, began growing fast. Soon it became a splendid city. Yudhisthira's royal court became the talk of all the other kingdoms.

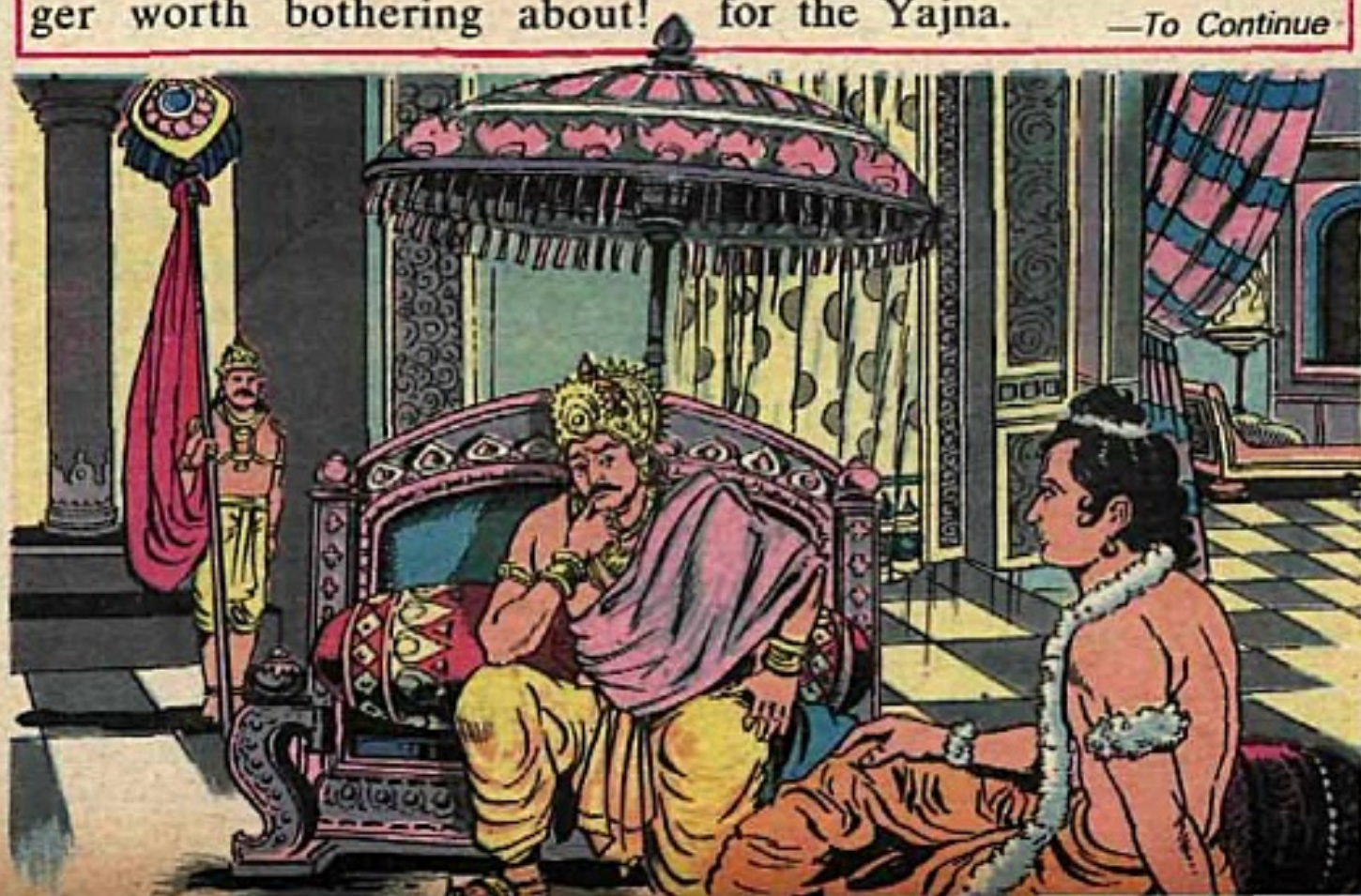
The Kauravas had thought that the Pandavas were no longer worth bothering about!

They had been dumped on a wasteland bordering the haunt of ogres and demons where they would never thrive! Now, the report of the transformation of the place surprised them.

And their surprise was to be followed by a shock when they heard that the Pandavas proposed to perform the Rajasuya Yajna. It was a very significant fire-rite. If no other king challenged its performer's right to go on with it, that meant that all acknowledged the performer as the King of kings!

It was sage Narada who advised Yudhisthira to prepare for the Yajna.

—To Continue—





# LUCK AND FAVOUR

A certain king and two bodyguards. Both were equally efficient. One night the king fell asleep while relaxing in the garden. The whole night passed. The two young men stood guard on him without a wink of sleep. The king was very happy. He announced that both were promoted to the ranks of governors over two regions of the kingdom.

The young men bowed to the king and thanked him profusely.

"Are you happy?" asked the king.

"We are immensely happy. Before this nobody at our young age had held such important position," they said.

"I know. What do you think

to be the cause of your promotion?" asked the king.

"My good luck, Your Majesty!" answered the first young man.

"Your kindness, Your Majesty!" answered the second young man.

"Good, good," said the king. Just then a servant brought to the king a bunch of bananas and a pineapple. They were the first produce of a new orchard.

"You two are equally dear to me. These two items being the first yields from a new orchard, they have a special value. I give these two items to you two," said the king. He called for two embroidered bags. In one bag he put the banana bunch and

gave it to the first young man. In the other bag he put the pineapple and gave it to the second young man.

The two young men thanked the king and left for their homes. On the way the second young man told the first "My friend, my wife is allergic to pineapple. Will you exchange your bunch of banana for my pineapple?"

"Gladly," said the first young man. They exchanged the bags.

In the evening the first young man came running to the king and asked him, "My lord, has your diamond ring slipped off your finger?"

"Well, ah — I'm afraid it has!" said the king.

"Here it is. I found it in my gift bag!"

"Your gift bag?" the king asked with some surprise.

"My lord, at my friend's request I changed my bag for his. At home I opened it and found the ring along with the pineapple. I knew that it must have slipped off your finger!"

"Please keep the ring. Treat it as a gift from me," said the king. The young man thanked him and went away.

The king told the queen, "I got a lesson today. The first young man said that it is his luck that got him the promotion. The second young man said that it was my kindness that got him the promotion. Though I really like both of them equally, the second young man's answer flattered me and I slipped my ring into his bag. Now I realise how strong was the first young man's faith in his good luck! His luck stole a march on my favour!"



## MULLA MEETS THE SCHOLAR

"Mulla ! Our Sultan is worried. A great scholar is coming to the city. Afraid of facing him, all our scholars have fled," the Sultan's messenger informed Mulla Nasruddin.



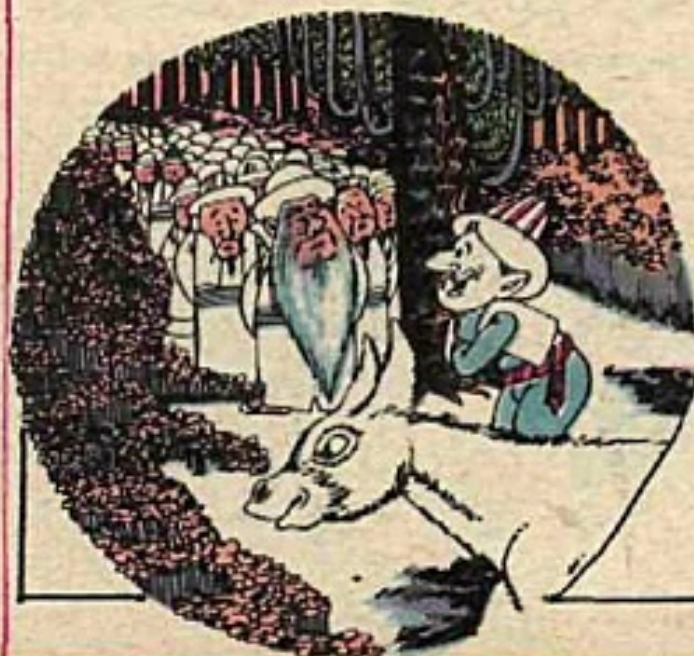
"Is that so? Let me meet the scholar," said the Mulla, hopping on to his donkey.



At the city-square the Mulla met the scholar who, followed by his disciples, was heading towards the Sultan's palace.



"No outsider can meet the scholars of our city unless he defeats a common man in argument. I am a common man. You may put questions to me," said the Mulla.





"Very well," said the proud scholar, "Where is the centre of the earth?" At once the Mulla replied, "Down here. If you do not believe me, measure the earth yourself!"



"How many stars are there in the sky?" asked the scholar. "There are as many stars as there are hairs on my donkey. You may count!" replied the Mulla.



"How many hairs do I have in my beard?" was the scholar's next question. "As many as my donkey's tail has!" replied the Mulla. "Prove it!" said the scholar haughtily.

"Very good," said the Mulla.

"Now, you pull a hair from my donkey's tail. I'll pull one from your beard. Let us go on like this. By the time your beard is finished, my donkey's tail also would be hairless!"

The Mulla was about to take hold of the scholar's beard when he turned and walked away very fast.



# MYSTERY OF MELANCHOLY

Vimal was poor, but he was always jolly.

But since he returned from the funeral ceremony of his maternal uncle, he was found to remain always pensive.

His intimate friend, Suresh, asked him, "What is the matter with you, Vimal? Why are you in a state of melancholy? Your uncle was quite aged. His death was not unexpected!"

"Who said that I'm sorry on account of his death?"

"Then?"

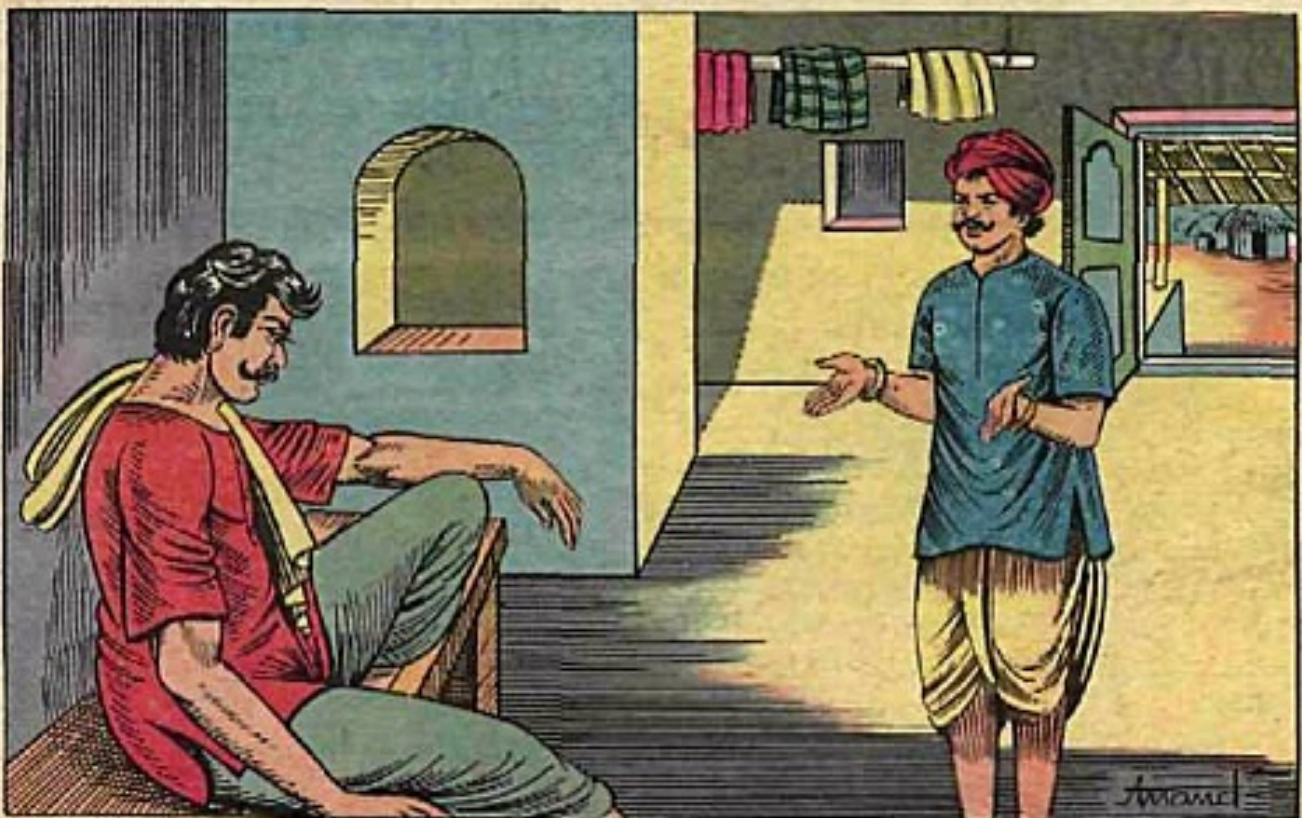
"Well, he had no heir. So I inherit all his property!"

"Fine, that should gladden you."

"I also inherit the property of my mother's sister, who died last month!" informed Vimal.

"How lucky you are! What then saddens you?" asked Suresh, quite surprised.

"There are no more heir-less relatives who would leave their properties to me!" said Vimal with a sigh.



# Treasure Island

A sea captain has come to the Admiral Benbow Inn, where he has received a visit from two men, a sailor named Black Dog, and Pew, a sinister blind man who has brought about the death of the captain. Some time later, Jim Hawkins and his mother, who owns the inn, hear a tapping outside their window. The blind man has returned! Mother and son escape and hide under a bridge.

"My dear," said my mother suddenly "take the money and run on. I am going to faint." Fortunately, we were near a little bridge and I managed to drag her down the bank and a little way under the arch. We were none too soon. Presently some men arrived, their feet beating out of time over bridge.



My curiosity was stronger than my fear; for I could not remain where I was, but crept back to the bank, where I was able to see the men gathered round the inn. The blind man was issuing his commands, his voice afire with rage. "In, in, in!" he shouted.

There was a pause, then a cry of surprise, and then a voice shouting from the house: "Bill's dead!" Presently the window of the captain's room was thrown open with a slam, and a man leaned out. "Pew," he cried, "They've been here before us. The money and Flint's map, they're both gone!"



Just then a whistle was clearly audible through the night, twice repeated. It was a signal. "There's Dick," cried one of the men. "We'll have to run for it, mates." The men began to scatter, but just as they did so, the noise of four horses could be heard, and four riders came in sight in the moonlight.



One of them did not see the blind man who was fleeing in his direction until it was too late. The rider tried to save him, but in vain. Down went Pew with a cry that rang high into the night. He fell on his side and moved no more.



I leapt to my feet and hailed the riders, seeing as I did so that they were revenue officers. I learned afterwards that they had heard from someone in the village that a lugger lay at anchor at Kitt's Hole, and had been on their way to see what was afoot. As for Pew, he was stone dead.

As for my mother, when we carried her back to the inn, a little cold water brought her back to consciousness again. In the meantime, two of the excise men rode on to Kitt's Hole but by the time they had managed to reach to shore, the lugger was gone.



"I have something in my pocket," I told the leader of the excise men, "which I would like to give to Dr. Livesey. He took me forthwith to the doctor, whom we found dining with Squire Trelawney. Briefly I told him what had happened, and then I handed him the oilskin packet which I had found in the captain's trunk.



"If you are agreeable," said the doctor, "we will open the packet." The bundle was opened and in it we found two things—a book and a sealed packet. The book was an account book. The packet contained a map. "This map," cried the squire, "must show the hiding-place of the treasure of Flint, the man referred to by one of those villains."



"Now I happen to know," the squire went on, "that Flint was the bloodthirstiest buccaneer that ever sailed. I heard that he died off Savannah. That captain who died probably stole the map, and since then Pew and the rest of Flint's old shipmates have been after him!"

"We have the map," continued the squire, "therefore there is no reason why we should not go after the treasure ourselves. Livesey, you will give up this wretched practice at once. Tomorrow I start for Bristol to fit out a ship in the docks there. In ten days' time we'll be ready. Hawkins shall come as cabin boy, and you will be the ship's doctor."



So the weeks passed until there came a letter addressed to Dr. Livesey, with the addition: 'To be opened in case of his absence by young Hawkins.' As the doctor was away, I opened it and read that the squire had found a ship whose name was the *Hispaniola*, and that he also had found himself a sea cook named Long John Silver, who had lost a leg. Silver, it seemed, had also helped him to find his crew.



It was longer than the squire imagined before we were ready for sea, and none of our first plans could be carried out as intended. The doctor had to go to London to find a physician to take charge of his practice; the squire was hard at work in Bristol; and I lived on at the squire's hall, under the charge of Redruth, the game-keeper, full of day-dreams for hours on end.



The letter ended by telling me to go at once to see my mother, and then to come full speed with the game-keeper, Redruth, to Bristol. The next morning I went back to the Admiral Benbow, where I found my mother in good spirits. I was happy to learn also that the squire had found her an apprentice to help while I was away. The next morning I said goodbye to my mother and the dear old Admiral Benbow.

—To Continue

# If Beards Caught Fire

**L**ong ago there was a king who decided to appoint a body-guard for himself.

Candidates were called for interview. It was known throughout the kingdom that the king was a lover of beards. He had grown an impressive beard himself and his ministers and nobles also imitated him.

It was not surprising that a number of candidates having beards presented themselves for the interview. They hoped that

their beards would secure the post for them.

But it was not to be so. Their muscles, stamina, swiftness of movement, knowledge of defence tricks were taken into consideration by the king's general and his minister who interviewed them.

The general and the minister finally selected three young-men, all having beards. The king was to make his final selection of one from them.



"I see, you all have beards. That is fine. But there is one problem," observed the king when the three were presented before him.

The three candidates waited to hear what the problem could be.

"If suddenly my beard and your beard catch fire simultaneously, how would you act?" the king asked one of the candidates.

"I shall act to save your beard, my lord!" replied the candidate.

"What would be your move?" the king asked the next candi-

date.

"I should put out fire from my beard first, so that wholeheartedly I can work to extinguish the royal beard," replied he.

"What about you?" the king asked the third.

"My lord, I have two hands. With one hand I shall put out fire from the beard of Your Highness while putting it out from my own beard with the other hand," replied the candidate.

"Good. You are appointed," the king gave his decision.

—Retold by Pramod Chandra Pattanayak.



## A Case of Curiosity

In a certain city lived a young merchant. He was married in a very rich family.

But these were not his only qualifications. He had a rare virtue of which nobody other than himself was aware. He could understand the language of the beasts. But the sage who had taught him the secret had warned him against his telling what he heard from the beasts to anybody. If he violated this rule, he was to die instantly.

One summer night he was

refreshing himself on the roof of his house when he heard one of his bulls telling his donkey, "My brother, I am tired of drawing the plough. You are lucky. Once in a week our master goes out to the bazar riding you. For that you are kept fit and elegant. I envy you!"

The flattered donkey said, "Dear bull, it is not luck that has much to do with the situation, but the brains. I have that stuff in plenty."

"It must be so. Brother



Donk, won't you exercise a bit of that for my sake and tell me how to get some relief?" asked the bull.

"Well, since you seek my advice, I cannot disappoint you! You feign sickness tomorrow. Do not get up. That will do the trick," said the donkey.

The merchant heard the dialogue with attention and tiptoed down to his room.

In the morning a servant reported to him of that particular bull behaving strangely. It refused to stand up.

"Hm!" said the master. "Drag my donkey to the field and put it under the yoke. Make it plough the land till the sunset."

The servants obeyed the master. The donkey had not foreseen such a fate. It was dead tired when it returned to its shed.

"I enjoyed my holiday very well, Brother Donk! I am going to do the same thing tomorrow!" the happy bull told the donkey.

"Don't do so!" shrieked out the donkey. "I overheard our master saying that if you don't work normally tomorrow, he will sell you to a butcher!"

"I thank God that you overheard this. I shall behave tomorrow," said the panicky bull.

The merchant was waiting near the shed to hear their



conversation. He was amused at the donkey's invention, so much so that he could not control his laughter even when sitting for dinner.

"Why do you laugh?" asked his wife.

"I cannot reveal to you," replied the merchant.

At this his wife drew a long face. "What is there so secret about the cause of your laughter that you cannot reveal it to me?" she complained and thereafter refused to talk to him.

The merchant was much upset. He confided to her that he was capable of understanding the language of the beasts, but he was forbidden to say what he

understood. If he would ever say it, he shall die.

"You must tell me what you heard today that amused you so much!" insisted his wife.

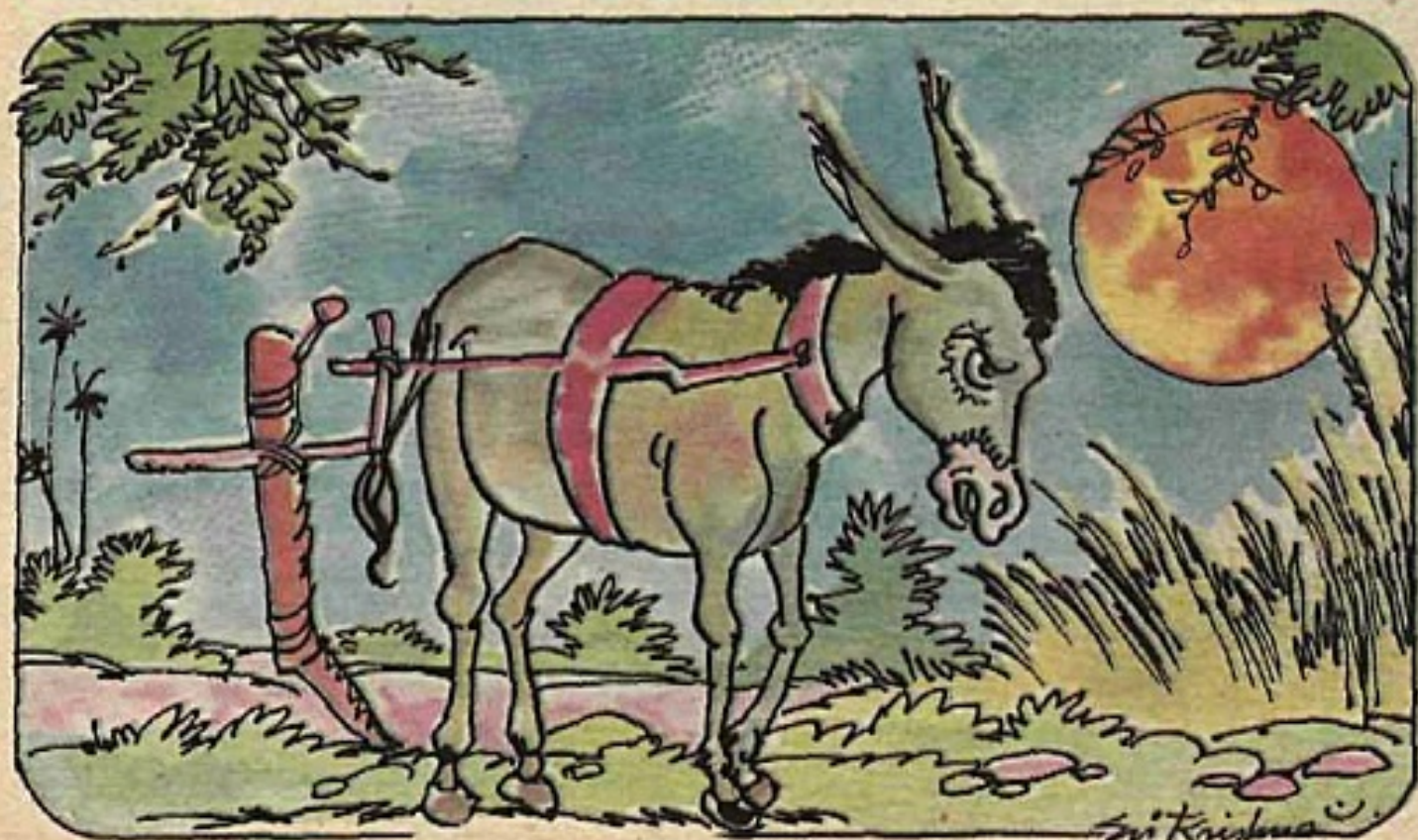
"I cannot. If I tell you, I shall die!"

"You must tell me!"

However hard the merchant tried to stop her from being curious about it, she was only more vehement in her demand.

The merchant could not bear with the situation any longer. He decided to tell the lady what took place between the bull and the donkey and then die!

He took the lady aside, close to the roost. Suddenly he heard a hen telling a cock, "If I ask



you to do something that will cause you death, will you do it?"

"I'll do it if that saves your life or does some real good to anybody else!" replied the cock.

"If I ask you only to satisfy my idle curiosity?" asked the hen.

"I'll give a damn to you!" replied the cock.

"And look at this foolish young man who is going to die for no other reason than satisfy to the lady's idle curiosity!" said the hen with anguish.

A great change came over the merchant immediately. He called his parents and his wife's parents and told them, "Knowing full well that I shall die if I

violate a certain rule, my wife insists that I do so only to satisfy her curiosity. What do you say to this?"

"We are ashamed to call you our daughter. Fie on you!" shouted the lady's mother.

"Too much love and affection from us have spoilt her. She knows nothing except getting her wish fulfilled—however meaningless it might be!" said the father of the lady.

The lady realised her folly. She wept.

"Never mind, child, be sensible in the future," the merchant's parents told her affectionately.





## CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

**B**hushan was the landlord's son. No doubt he was handsome, according to the popular idea of handsomeness. But had he not been a landlord's son, nobody would perhaps make a mention of this to him. People wanted to please his father by referring to him as a charming lad!

Bhushan felt quite proud of his figure. As a result, he looked down upon others.

In his village lived a woman who was blind, a young man whose nose was not straight, a third man whose arms were shorter in relation to his body and an old man who was lame.

Bhushan laughed whenever he saw any of them. Once his mother came to know about this. She told him, "Son, if you are not noble enough to be kind towards the disabled, you

should not at least laugh at them. Your conduct is unworthy of even an ordinary man. I feel ashamed of you. Your father will be disappointed if he comes to know of this habit of yours!"

Bhushan really felt sorry. The same day, while he was on his way to a friend's house in the afternoon, those four villagers, whom he used to ridicule, happened to see him at the village-square.

"Look here, boy, my arms may be small, but they are strong enough to teach you a lesson. What harm have we done to you that you laugh at us?" the man with smaller arms said, taking long steps towards Bhushan.

"Leave him, brother, leave him. Providence will punish him for his arrogance. He will have a taste of the anguish which we



are experiencing !” said the old cripple.

The old man’s words sounded like a curse to Bhushan. He began to run.

The fear of the curse remained in him for many days. Then he went over to the town for his studies. Gradually he forgot the experience.

Years passed. Bhushan got married. After a year or so his mother died, followed by his father. Bhushan settled down in the town.

Bhushan’s wife, Sudha, was expecting child. She went to live with her parents shortly before it was time for delivery.

Bhushan was alone at home. Suddenly one night the curse the cripple had cast on him came back to his memory. A shiver ran through him. How wicked it was of him to laugh at those disabled people of his village!

He received the message that Sudha had given birth to a son. He was delighted. He started for his father-in-law’s house at once.

He wondered before entering Sudha’s room: whom does the child resemble — him or Sudha?

But he was shocked at the sight of the child. The child’s arms were deformed, one of its legs extended up to the knee only; its nose was not straight. And it was blind too!

“Look at my charming child!” Sudha said.

Bhushan thought that Sudha was being sarcastic. But soon he felt that she was quite sincere. Perhaps every mother finds her son wonderful!—he thought.

As the child grew up, Bhushan grew more and more pensive. He did not let the boy mix with the children of the neighbourhood. They might laugh at the boy! That was his fear.

One day a holy man paid a visit to the town. People said that he was capable of solving any problem. Bhushan invited the holy man to his house and spoke to him of his anguish on account of his son.

The holy man looked at the boy for some time. Then he meditated. Later he said, "Those four disabled people whom you had insulted must pardon you. That alone will cure your son of his deformities."

Bhushan proceeded to his village. The old cripple was dead. But the other three were there. Bhushan met them and apologised to them for his childhood misbehaviour.

"You are a noble soul. That is why you have come to humble people like us. Who remembers what you had said or done as a

child? Forget about that, sir!" they said.

Bhushan found out where the cripple had been buried. He knelt down near his grave and shed tears of repentance. He got back his lost peace of mind. He stood up.

Suddenly Bhushan's sleep ended. He recollected the whole dream.

A week after that he received the news that he had been blessed with a son. This time it was no dream. He hurried to have the first glimpse of his son.

His mind was full of anxiety because of the dream. Slowly he went near Sudha and his child. But it was a charming babe! He smiled. Soon tears drizzled in his eyes. "Those four had really pardoned me!" he told himself.



## THE SECRET



A landlord had a cowshed away from his palatial house. One of his servants named Ramu was in charge of the cattle. He and his wife lived in a hut close by the shed. In the morning he led the cattle to the fields and spent the whole day there, looking after the grazing cattle. At noon his wife carried food for him. In the evening he brought the cattle back to the shed.

Ramu had to keep a watch on the cattle even at night. Other servants went to help him, but he had to live with the cattle.

One evening, for some work, he came to the landlord's house.

Adjacent to the house was the temple of Lord Krishna.

Ramu went into the temple and sat gazing at the idol for a long time. He felt charmed. He told the priest, "It is my misfortune that I cannot visit the temple regularly. I shall consider myself lucky if I could have the Darshan of the Lord at least once in seven days."

"What stops you from coming?" asked the priest—without paying much attention to him.

"My duty at the cowshed. If you speak to the landlord, he may agree to send someone to relieve me for a few hours once every week so that I can come here," said Ramu with folded hands.

But the priest would not care to speak to the landlord on his behalf. He said in a casual manner, "What is the need of coming to the temple for the Deity's Darshan? If one is a devotee, one can see Krishna right in the field!"

"Really? I never knew that!" exclaimed Ramu.

"Very few know this secret. I don't tell many!" said the priest rather in joke.

A full year passed. One day the priest was returning to his temple after a visit to a relative's house that was on the other side of the vast field. He saw Ramu relaxing under a tree, the cattle grazing in the green meadow around him.

Upon noticing the priest Ramu ran to him and bowed down to him. "Sir, I do not know how to thank you for the secret you disclosed to me!" he said enthusiastically.

"What secret?" asked the priest, surprised, for he had forgotten all about their conversation.

"Did you not say that one

could see Krishna in the field?"

"Well, er..... perhaps I did!"

"What a wealth you gave me, sir. As soon as I arrive in the field I close my eyes and call Krishna. At once he is there—everywhere—all around me. He loves to play with my cows. Then he sits down and plays his flute! He remains here for a few minutes, but what a joy he leaves in my heart!"

Wiping his tears of joy and gratitude, Ramu said again, "Sir, how lucky you are that you live in His company day and night. But I don't envy you. This much is enough for me."

The priest did not know what to say. Back in the temple, he wept bitterly before the Deity and said, "Lord, I wish I had an iota of that simple and pure faith Ramu had! He does not envy me, but I envy him!"



## Nature's Kingdom

# CATCHING HABITS OF AN UNDERWATER HUNTER

**The otter loves to hunt and will often kill far more fish than it can eat**

Fishermen, who sit patiently by the side of a stream with their bait and rods, have an unseen rival. This is the otter, which paddles away out of sight below the surface of the water, helping itself to a lot of the fish the angler would love to catch.

Salmon, trout, eels and other fishes we use as food are liked by the otter, which kills more than it can eat. After tasting each fish by biting a piece out of its back, the otter leaves it on the bank of the stream and hurries off after another.

Otters belong to the weasel family. They differ from their relatives by being water creatures. With the exception of the mink, which loves to swim in lakes and rivers, the other animals of the weasel family are all land animals.

There are several kinds of otters living in warm and temperate countries. The European otter, found throughout Europe and Northern Asia, is still fairly common in many parts of Great Britain.

It is rather a large animal, measuring about a metre or so from its nose to the tip of its tail.

When swimming in the water, the otter might easily be mistaken for a seal, for it looks very much like one. But when it climbs out on the bank, we see that it has legs, not flippers. Its short feet have webs between the toes and are as good as fins.

The tail, which is broad and flat at the tip, makes an excellent rudder.

In the water, the otter swims, dives, twists and turns as easily as a fish. But it does not breathe like a fish. Although it can stay under water for several minutes at a time, it has to come up to the surface when the air in its lungs

is exhausted.

An otter is a lively animal. It chases fish up and down a stream, darts after water rats and catches wild ducks by approaching them under water and seizing them from below.

But the otter does not spend all its time in the water. When the streams are low and the




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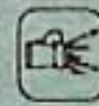



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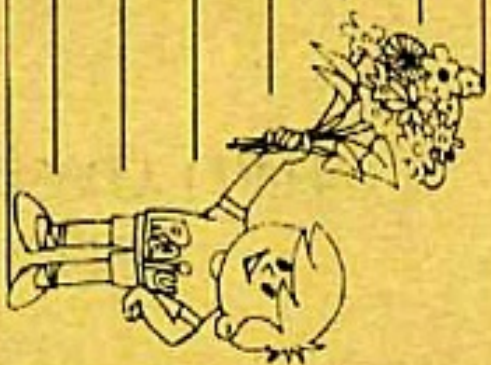
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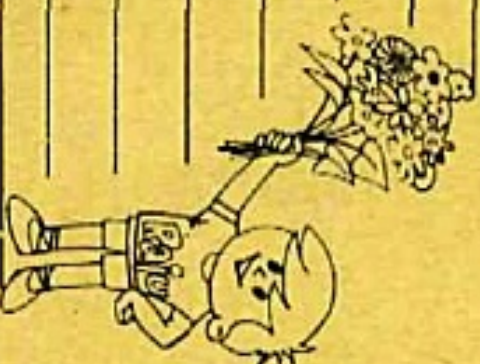
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MON				
TUE				
WED				
THU				
FRI				
SAT				

INTERVAL

5TH PERIOD	6TH PERIOD	7TH PERIOD	8TH PERIOD



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fishing is bad, it will sometimes travel overland from one stream to another, covering the ground with loping gallop at a great speed, in spite of its short legs.

In winter, it often takes long journeys inland in search of food, and will sometimes raid farmyards and kill fowls and ducks.

In Canada and the most northern states of the USA, the otter will flounder about in the snow, sliding down the slopes in the hope of finding something to eat.

When the streams are frozen over, it will hunt beneath the ice, if it can find a hole through which it can wriggle to get into the water.

Young otters stay with their parents for at least a year, and sometimes longer. They make their home in a hole in the bank of a stream or in a dugout among the roots of some old trees not far from the water's edge.

Unless they are disturbed by the hounds of an otter hunt, otters stay in their home until the sun is almost setting. Then they emerge and begin their nightly activities.

If their den happens to be at the top of a

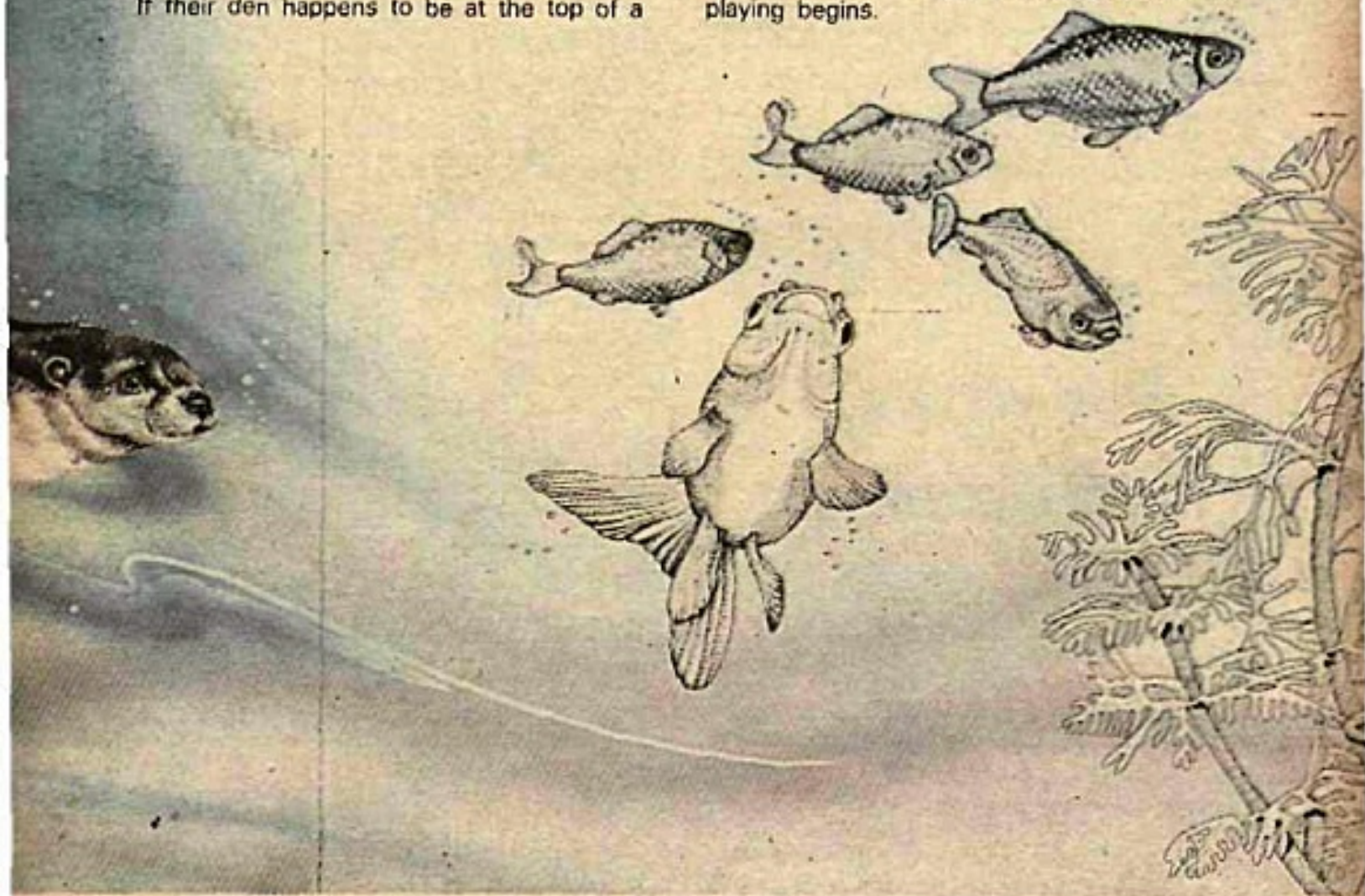
steep, sloping bank, the otters slide down the slope one after another and splash into the water.

Young otters and old ones too seem to enjoy this. They also like free-for-all rough-and-tumbles. The ground all round their den is nearly always trampled down from the games they play together. The young ones roll over and over like puppies, clawing up grass and flinging it all over the place.

At first, baby otters are afraid of the water. Their mother has to push them in when she is taking them to the water for the first time. But they soon overcome this fear and join the adult otters on fishing expeditions.

They do not return every morning to their old home, but they just slip into any suitable hole they can find under the banks by the side of the water.

There they go to sleep until the sun goes down and another night of hunting, eating and playing begins.



## THE CASE OF THE ROYAL SEAL

—Randor Guy

"I agree, Your Majesty, the matter—is most serious!" Sidhanta said running his wrinkled fingers through his long silvery beard.

"My dear minister, not merely serious, but positively dangerous. How can such a thing happen in any well-governed kingdom? You must find the culprit and he shall be severely punished!, said King Parakrama, his voice slightly raised.

The king rarely raised his voice and Sidhanta knew that

the king was highly upset over what had happened.

"Noble King, I shall do my best to find the culprit."

"Sidhanta, doing your best will not do. You must solve this case. I have never known you failing and I hope you will not fail!"

"Gracious King, you are most generous in praising me! I am lucky I have never failed you so far, but one can never tell. Failure can come to one at anytime. One must be ready to take success and failure in one's



stride. Of course, I shall strive my utmost!"

"Sidhanta, I am deeply agitated in mind and therefore in body too. Imagine the royal seal being duplicated! Never heard of such a thing! The seal is being used everyday. How could one ever steal it and prepare a fake one? Luckily we found out the forgery. Now we must find out the fellow who made the counterfeit seal and who possesses it."

\*\*\*

Sidhanta walked along the wide carpeted corridor of the magnificent Mallipuram palace. It was huge, sprawling, and architecturally beautiful. The corridors were well-decorated with artistic objects brought from many lands, near and far—chandeliers—candle-stands specially made in Mallipuram by a family of brilliant artisans, etc. But the wise minister's mind was not in them. What King Parakrama had told him upset him much. The able king of Mallipuram had a royal seal made of high-quality gold, a real work of art. It had been carved by a famous goldsmith who had died two decades ago. The royal seal was kept in a sandalwood



casket, equally artistic. The king or the minister for the royal seal were the only persons privileged to make use of it. Orders, fiats, judgements, decrees had to bear the royal seal, and one of the two took it out of the casket, and affixed it on the document. The seal was normally kept in a separate room called the Seal Chamber and now someone had duplicated the royal seal! Something that was believed to be impossible! It was never taken out of the Seal Chamber, except by the king himself. Even the concerned minister had no power to remove it out of the chamber. How then was the seal

duplicated, and fake orders issued! Who could have done it and how? Sidhanta was puzzled.

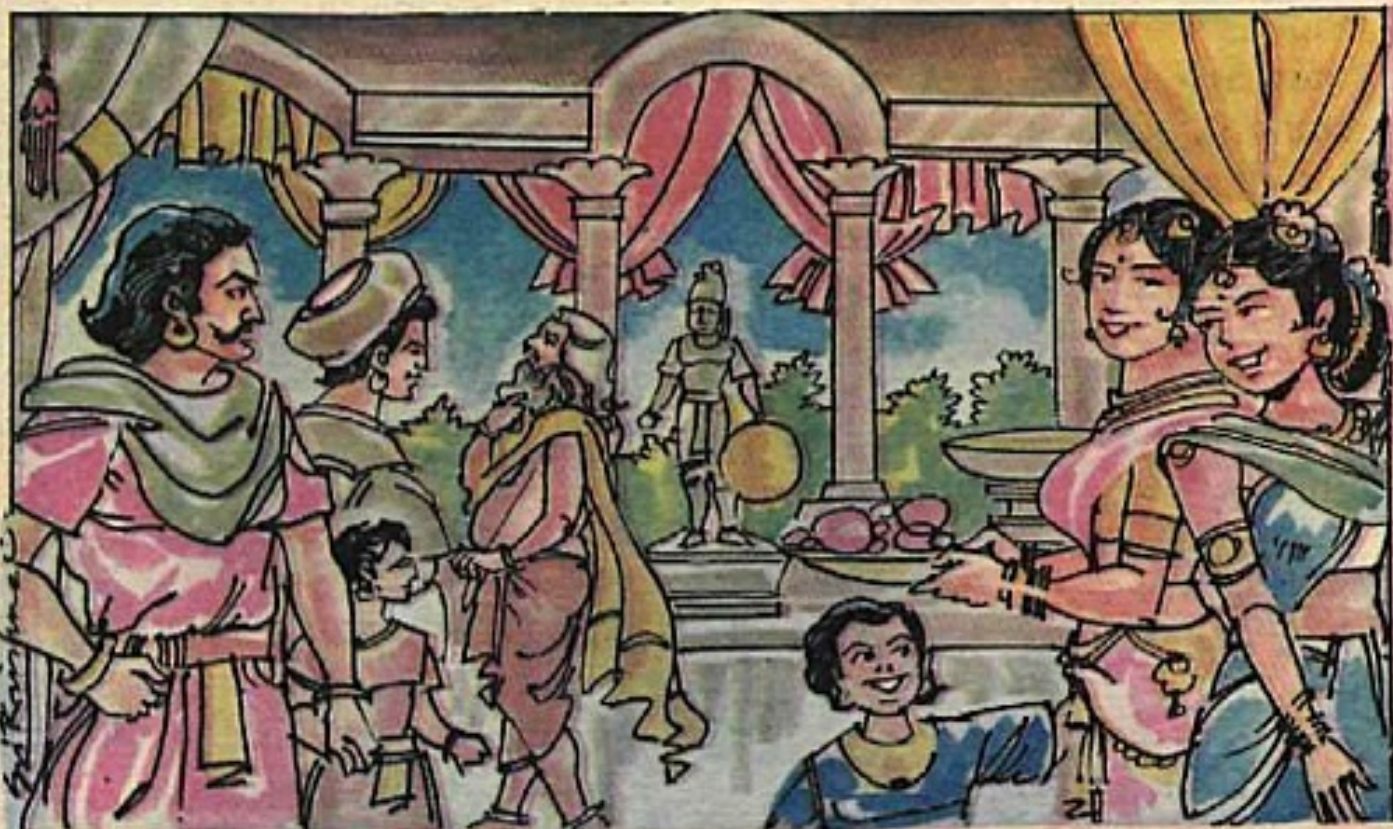
Sidhanta reached his private chamber in the palace and paced the decorated floor. He had solved many problems for his king, but this was indeed a difficult one.

\*\*\*

Sidhanta asked the king to permit him to walk all over the palace, at will, at any hour of the day or night. There were some parts of the palace, mainly the ladies' quarters, where men were not allowed without the king or queen's permission. Hence Sidhanta had to ask the king even though he was a

minister. Sidhanta was at once granted permission, and he was now on that mission of a leisurely tour of the palace! He walked from room to room, chamber to chamber, and let his eyes take in every tiny detail. He saw palace servants and officials, men and women, go about their assigned duties and some looked askance at the wise old minister. They rarely saw him just wandering, seemingly aimlessly, and Sidhanta pretended to ignore them.

By now it was dark, the sun having disappeared behind the high mountains. The palace servant in charge of lights, Danava, was seen going around the



rooms discharging his duty. The palace was lighted with candles of various colours kept inside glass containers of many shapes, designs and colours. They gave out a fine colourful illumination which added lustre to the grand palace. Sidhanta stood behind a huge pillar, and watched Danava at work. He could take the glass container out, dust it, remove the burnt-out candle and replace it with a new one. Then he would light it and put it back inside the container. When he lit one large red candle, the flame seemed too thick and the melted candle dripped on to the floor. Danava seemed to have scalded his fingers too, and Sidhanta saw him sucking the hurt finger with haste! Sidhanta smiled and his fingers pulled at his flowing beard with feverish haste. Quickly, he walked out, leaving Danava to carry on with his work.

He sat in his house, under the mango tree, and stared at the shining moon high in the sky. He began to laugh softly to himself. Nodding, he went inside and got ready for his night prayers.

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Danava knelt before King Pa-



rakrama, his hands shivering. Sidhanta sat on a low cushioned chair near the king, his eyes never leaving the man in charge of the palace lights. King Parakrama's deep eyes burned with red-hot rage.

"Sidhanta, this man shall be banished. He has committed the most heinous crime, duplicating our royal seal! Because he has confessed and because he has been with us for many years, I have spared his life, and have given him the lesser punishment of banishment. Sidhanta, I am amazed at your wisdom. Now, tell us how you found out the culprit!" King Parakrama was

eager.

"Beloved King, it was most intriguing at first. I did not know what to do. But I knew that the crime must have been committed by some insider, somebody who had access to the Seal Chamber. Not many go inside that room! So I wanted to find out who went into that room. To mislead people I looked into every room, every part of our palace. I did not want anyone to suspect me. That's why I went into all the areas, even the women's quarters. Then I saw Danava at work. While lighting one candle, I saw the melted candle dripping in drops. Suddenly I got the answer to the puzzle. Only a person going into the Seal Chamber can take out the Seal. The casket has no lock. The man who took it out knew

that. He could take it out, get its imprint in wax swiftly and the rest was easy! Any good engraver will make a duplicate using the wax mould! Who could be the man who had easy access and could light candles inside that room without arousing even a trace of suspicion? Who? Danava, the palace lights-man! That's how it was, noble king, the dripping of the candle led me to the correct solution!"

"Excellent, my dear friend, you are truly wise. Congratulations." King Parakrama rose and embraced his wise old minister warmly.

Danava was removed from the King's presence and Parakrama took his faithful minister to his inner apartment for meeting the queen and telling her about the latest success of Sidhanta.



# The Great Dark of Friday

**I**t was a fine day—Friday, the 19th of May 1780.

In those days America was not electrified. If life was different from what it is today, it was leisurely and free from any acute tension.

Something strange happened at 9.30 in the morning. The sun suddenly disappeared. No, there was not even a shred of cloud in the sky. There was no smoke. It was by no means a day of solar eclipse.

Nevertheless, the sun just

faded out and along with a chill, an awful darkness set in!

How dense was the darkness? Well, to quote one of the records, this one by Mr. John Davenport, a member of the Legislative Assembly of Connecticut, "The effect was that of having one's head encased within the confines of a black hood."

When two hours passed and yet there was no sign of the light returning, parents found their way to schools to collect their children. With candles and tor-



ches they managed to bring them back.

The darkness that began in New York, soon spread to Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. The darkest night claimed this large region when bright daylight should have reigned over it.

To add to the eerie climate, a strange greenish light pervaded the darkness.

People knew the passing of time by their clocks. The situation terrified them, but the terror got intensified when the night sky did not show a single star. That was to be a full moon

night. But there was no trace of the moon.

Few had the peace of mind or the courage to go to bed. People crowded in the churches and public squares praying for the moon and the stars to appear.

Many thought that there will be a dawn no more! The darkness for them meant the prelude to the day of Judgment.

However, dawn broke out at the expected hour. People heaved sighs of relief. They smiled only when the sun rose.

No scientific explanation has been found to this day for this phenomenon known as "The Great Dark of Friday".





## OVER-QUALIFIED

**K**anak Gupta was the king's treasurer. He managed his work all alone for many years. But a time came when the task grew difficult. The king added several new departments to his government. It was no more possible for one officer to keep the accounts of the expenditure under different heads.

The king sanctioned Kanak Gupta two assistants and asked his chief minister to find out two efficient men to fill the posts.

Two months passed. The chief minister complained to the king that Kanak Gupta had employed three assistants in place of two and distributed the salary meant for two assistants among three. As a result the two candidates the minister had supplied were receiving less salary than sanctioned for them.

The king summoned Kanak

Gupta and asked, "Is it true that you have employed three assistants?"

"Yes, my lord, but I am not drawing any more money for the third man," said Kanak Gupta.

"His Majesty knows that!" growled the minister. "But why should you appoint three assistants when the king sanctioned only two posts? Is it not disobedience?"

"To be frank, I had not looked at the situation from that angle. It is only for efficient working that I appointed a third man!" said Kanak Gupta, apologetically.

"Do you mean to say that the two candidates I supplied to you are not sufficiently qualified to do the work?" demanded the minister.

Kanak Gupta kept quiet.



"Why don't you answer?" the minister asked rudely.

"Must I answer? Very well, let me tell you that the candidates you supplied are rather over-qualified!"

"Over-qualified?" The king expressed his surprise.

"Yes, my lord. Their greatest qualifications are, while one is the minister's cousin, the other is the minister's wife's cousin.

And they are always keen to vaunt their qualifications. How can I take them to task if they make any error? That is why I had to employ a third person whom I can scold when the other two make mistakes!" explained Kanak Gupta.

The minister's face paled. "All right. You can go," the king told Kanak Gupta after passing a hurried glance on the minister.

### The Question

The father was out to show his little son the remarkable places in the city. "You can ask me any question about any institution, son," said the father.

Pointing at a majestic building, the father said, "We are now passing a fourteenth-century castle, son. Any question?"

"No, thanks."

A little later said the father again, "Now we are passing the most fabulous restaurant in the city. Any question?"

"Yes. Why are we passing it?"





*New Tales of King  
Vikram and the Vampire*

## THE MAGIC RING

**D**ark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At the intervals of the roaring thunder could be heard the moaning of jackals and the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning showed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King, I don't know when you will be successful in your mission. But I can tell you one thing: there are people who throw away the fruit of their labour even after winning it through much pains. Let me narrate an incident to you. Pay attention to it. That might bring you some relief."

The vampire went on: Sumant was an orphan. A sage



was kind to him and enrolled him as a student in his Ashram school. Sumant spent ten years in the Ashram and completed his studies successfully.

The sage gave him a scroll and said, "My boy, this will secure you a high position as a scholar in any of the royal courts around. Go and prosper."

Sumant decided to meet the king of Rohitpur. He began walking in that direction.

He lost his way and found himself in a forest. The sun was setting. He looked in all directions and saw a house in ruins on a hill. He thought of spending his night there.

At the foot of the hill he met a young man who looked like a prince. Sumant smiled at the young man and greeted him. But the young man looked grave.

"So, you too wish to try your luck! Who between us should have the chance? Should we fight a duel and decide?" the young man asked, putting his hand on his sword.

Sumant was surprised. "What do you mean?" he asked in return. "How can we fight a duel when I don't even have a sword?"

"Then you must wait for the next full-dark night and give me the chance to try my luck tonight!"

"I tell you once again that I don't know what you mean. Try your luck by all means. I have no desire to stand in your way. I am a traveller looking for a shelter," said Sumant.

The young man calmed down. By and by he told Sumant what had brought him there. He was the prince of Rohitpur. The deserted house on the hill-top was a haunted house. During the last fifty years whoever entered it never came out of it alive. Inside the haunted house

there is a bed. Under the pillow on the bed lies a magic ring. One who would be able to pass an *Amavasya* or Moonless night in the house would find the ring. Whoever wears the ring would live for a hundred years.

The night that was coming was to be a moonless night. The prince had decided to try his luck.

"In order to get the ring one must climb the hill alone and spend the night in the haunted house all alone. But if you camp here, I shall feel encouraged," the prince told Sumant.

"I shall be happy to await you here. I wish you success." Sumant sat down on a rock.

Evening was coming upon the forest. The prince began to climb the hill. Sumant sat listening to the chirping of home-coming birds. An hour later Sumant heard footsteps behind him and saw the prince coming back.

"What's the matter?" Sumant asked.

The prince confessed that halfway up the hill his mind was filled with a great fear. He could not proceed.

"Dear Prince! Remember God and push on. Have cour-



age!" Sumant encouraged him.

The prince began climbing again. By then it had grown dark. Jackals howled behind the haunted house and glow-worms flitted around it. The prince came back to Sumant again and broke down. "No, my friend, I do not have the courage to spend a night in a haunted house," he said, sighing repeatedly.

Sumant consoled the prince and then asked, "Dear Prince, will you let me take a chance?"

"Who am I to stop you?" said the prince.

Sumant climbed the hill. The house on the top was utterly



dark, but its doors and windows were open. The star-studded sky could be seen through the windows.

As soon as Sumant entered the house he was greeted by blood-curdling laughter and shrieks. Sumant did not show any sign of fear. When his eyes got accustomed to the darkness, he found out the bedstead and sat down on it.

"Young man! Your desire to live for a hundred years is going to be the cause of your death tonight!" a nasal voice announced.

"I have no desire to live for a hundred years. At the same

time I am not going to die tonight unless that is what Providence wills for me," said Sumant.

There was silence for a long time. Then, after a sudden peal of laughter, the nasal voice said again, "Are you not afraid of ghosts?"

"Why should a living man be afraid of those dead?" said Sumant.

There was silence again. Sumant sat meditating. The bedstead rocked violently and blasts of cool wind burst upon him, accompanied by the same terrible laughter. Bats flew crisscross, almost touching his head. But Sumant did not seem to pay heed to anything.

Time passed and dawn broke out. The laughter and the blasts ceased totally. Tender light flooded the room. Sumant lifted the pillow and picked up the ring. He sang a prayer and then came out of the house.

In a few minutes he was at the bottom of the hill. The prince lay asleep, leaning against a rock. Sumant stood near him, looking at his sword. He coughed and shook a tree. But the prince's sleep was sound.

Sumant waited. Suddenly

there was the sound of a crash. The prince woke up. Both looked up and saw that the haunted house had collapsed.

"Here is the ring!" Sumant said, handing the precious possession over to the prince.

"My friend, I cannot believe my eyes. Now, tell me, what reward can I give you?" asked the prince and he added, "I don't mind giving you this diamond necklace valued ten thousand gold coins."

"I am a scholar. My joy lies in studies and discourses, not in such wealth. Thank you."

"How then am I going to pay my debt to you?" asked the prince.

"Spend the money you would have given me in helping the poor and the sick," said Sumant and then he started walking.

"Where are you going?" asked the prince.

"To Vishnupur or Sumanagarh—I am not sure."

Sumant went away.

The vampire paused for a moment and then demanded of King Vikram in a challenging tone, "O King, there are several issues to be resolved. If nobody could come out alive of the haunted house, how is it that



Sumant survived the night? Why did he not keep the precious ring to himself? He was on his way to Rohitpur. Why did he change his mind and set out for an unknown destination even after striking a friendship with the Prince of Rohitpur? Answer me, if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answers, your head would roll off your neck."

Forthwith replied King Vikram, "Ghosts cannot harm a man unless the man is afraid of ghosts. Sumant was totally fearless. That is why the ghosts could not harm him. All those who had died in the house must

have felt some fear thereby giving the ghosts a chance to do their mischief.

"Sumant did not keep the ring to himself because of several reasons. First of all, he was a believer in destiny. He knew that he will live as long as it was ordained. Living for a hundred years is not a boon by itself. It might mean long suffering with old age and disease! Thirdly, he knew how much the prince coveted the ring. Had he kept the ring to himself, the prince might have killed him. Of course, the prince was fast asleep and Sumant could have used the sword to finish off the prince. But Sumant was too enlightened to do such a thing!

"Sumant decided not to live in Rohitpur because his pre-

sence will deprive the prince of his pride. The prince would like to be known as the winner of the ring. He will always fear that Sumant might disclose the truth. Coming to know that Sumant was a scholar the prince could have invited him to remain in the court of Rohitpur. But he wanted Sumant to accept a reward then and there. That means he did not wish Sumant to be known to others in his kingdom. For Sumant Rohitpur or any other kingdom made little difference. So he changed his destination."

No sooner did King Vikram conclude his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.

—Devapriyo.



## From Company To Crown

The last phase of the Great Mutiny was marked by the storming of the British troop into Delhi. Within hours Delhi fell to the troop, but its commander, John Nicholson, lay dead, shot at by the mutineers.



The last Mughal, Bahadur Shah, whom the rebels had acknowledged as the emperor, was old and helpless. Near the tomb of his famous ancestor, Humayun, he surrendered to one Major Hodson, a cruel fellow.



Major Hodson located two of the sons of Bahadur Shah hiding behind the tomb. He caught hold of them, stripped them and shot them dead himself, before a stunned crowd of local people.



Bahadur Shah was deported to Rangoon, where he died in 1862, a prisoner. With him ended the Mughal dynasty. Two of his surviving sons had been last seen moving about as paupers.

After the end of the Mutiny the East India Company's soldiers began wreaking vengeance on Indians. Innocent villagers were hanged in trees or shot dead. Innumerable villages were burnt down.



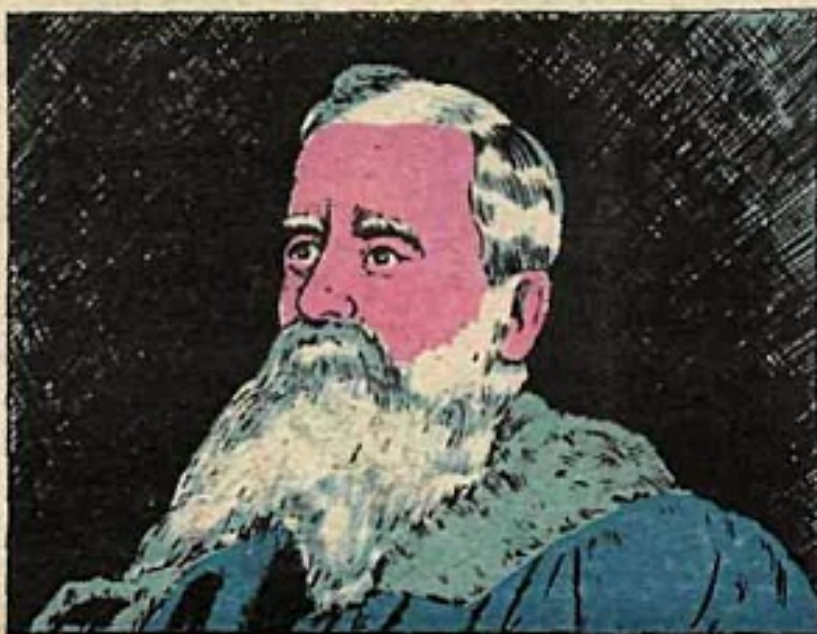
In Britain itself the Company's rule in India was subjected to severe criticism. The British Government decided to take over the administration of India, in the name of Queen Victoria, the monarch. She was to assume the title 'Kaizar-i-Hind'!

The Governor-General appointed by the Company now became the Viceroy (representative) of the monarch. On 1 November 1858, this transfer of power was announced in a durbar held at Allahabad by the Viceroy, Lord Canning.



Many changes were introduced. High Courts were established in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. Some importance was given to education, with education departments opened in some provinces.

In 1880 came Lord Ripon as the new Viceroy. He was a man of goodwill and a reformer. It was during his time that Local Boards and Municipalities were formed. The natives gained some small rights in administration.





Till then an Indian judge had no right to try a criminal case against an Englishman. Lord Ripon decided to give the same rights to both the white and the native judges. This infuriated his own countrymen in India.

Disgusted, Lord Ripon resigned his position and left for England. Indians saw in him a true friend and he was given an impressive farewell. Indians were gradually feeling the need for a national organisation.



In 1885 was formed the Indian National Congress. Its first session was held in Bombay under the presidentship of W.C. Bonnerji, an eminent barrister of Calcutta. A retired British Civilian, Allan Octavian Hume, had been an inspiration behind the Congress.

## Select As You Walk!

An old farmer and his wife were returning from a distant village to their own.

"My daughter and my two neices wish to pay a visit to their maternal uncle's house which is in your village. Can they accompany you?" an acquaintance asked the couple.

"Why not!" answered the farmer.

So the three young girls followed the old couple. The farmer's wife whispered to the

farmer, "It is time we choose a girl to marry our son. Here are three nice ones. Why don't you choose one from them?"

"Why not!" answered the farmer.

The way was long. They sat down under a tree for rest. "Who among you can make a wooden cooking pot for me?" the farmer asked the girls.

"A wooden cooking pot? I've never heard of such a thing," said the first girl.



"Nor have I," said the second.

"I think I can make one for you," said the third girl. She soon found out a dry chunk of wood and began carving it with a knife. She went on with her work as they walked. After an hour she handed over a smoking pipe to the farmer.

The farmer appreciated her intelligence and her craftsmanship.

They had to pass through a forest.

"Who can make the long road short?" asked the farmer.

"Long road short? I don't know how anyone can do that,"

said the first.

"Nor do I know" said the second.

"I can try," said the third girl. And she began to sing. Her voice was melodious. At intervals she said amusing anecdotes. They did not know when they had crossed the long distance between one and the other end of the forest.

"I have chosen the girl that should adorn our house as our daughter-in-law," the farmer whispered to his wife at the end of the journey.

Accordingly they sent the proposal to the girl's parents and it was accepted.

—A Tale of the Khamti Tribe





## Two Ministers

**T**he king of Rudrapur, Surya Singh, was not a bad man. But he had a minister named Sher Bahadur who thought himself to be the cleverest man in the world. He gave the king the impression that with him by his side the king had nothing to fear from anybody. On the other hand, everybody else should fear King Surya Singh and his great minister, Sher Bahadur!

King Surya Singh grew proud. This was observed by King Bhadra Dev of the neighbouring state, Samirgarh.

"King Surya Singh ought to be disenchanted about his crafty minister. Otherwise a time might come when he would attack our kingdom!" said Bhadra Dev.

"Right, my lord, let me pay a visit to Rudrapur and see what can be done about it," said Nakul Chand, King Bhadra Dev's minister.

King Surya Singh was informed of Nakul Chand's courtesy-visit. "We will humble the visitor so that he will learn to fear us. This is called diplomacy," said the mischievous Sher Bahadur.

Just before Nakul Chand's arrival in the palace of Rudrapur, the main gate was closed. From the terrace Sher Bahadur told Nakul Chand, "There is a hole in the wall for our dogs to go out and come in. You may use that for your entry."

"Sure, sure, if dogs are the only creatures to visit your royal

master!" commented Nakul Chand.

King Surya Singh who heard the comment looked pale. He ordered for the gate to be opened and the visitor brought to his presence.

Nakul Chand was a short-statured man. As soon as he was ushered into the king's presence, Sher Bahadur laughed and said, "Are all the people of your country short-statured like you?"

"We have people of all size. Our king sends ambassadors of my size to such neighbours who are known to be timid. We take care not to make innocent neighbours nervous," replied Nakul Chand.

Just then two sepoy's came there dragging along a stranger. "This fellow, who hails from Samirgarh, was burgling a house

in Rudrapur," they reported.

"Ha, ha! Samirgarh's people are burglars, eh?" observed Sher Bahadur.

Minister Nakul Chand looked at the captive and asked him, "How many houses have you burgled in Samirgarh?"

"Not even one, sir!"

"A fellow who lived normally in Samirgarh turns into a burglar in Rudrapur. There must be something wicked in the atmosphere here that makes an ordinary citizen a thief and a minister a discourteous babbler!" Nakul Chand said softly, looking at the roof, as if he was talking to himself!

King Surya Singh realised his minister's folly. He talked to Nakul Chand seriously and ignored his minister. Soon Sher Bahadur lost his position.





## Three Boons

**G**ovind and his wife Poornima lived in their small house in a corner of the village. Besides the house and a piece of land on which Govind raised a variety of crops, they had a pair of milch-cows. The cows yielded a good quantity of milk. The couple's income from the sale of milk was encouraging. Govind and Poornima took care of the cows.

Govind led his cows to the green meadows outside the village. At one place in the meadow there was a pond surrounded by some banyan trees. Close by the pond stood a hut. A hermit lived in the hut. Govind saw him from a distance. He looked wise, kind and compassionate. Govind of course had no occasion to talk to him.

One afternoon, while Govind was in the meadow a cyclone struck the area. Govind col-

lected his cows and took shelter under a big tree. After the wind and the rain subsided, he began walking towards his home, leading his cows along.

As was his habit, he looked into the hermit's hut. The hermit was not there. Govind looked in all directions to find where he was. To his surprise he saw the hermit lying under a tree, buried by a broken branch.

Govind rushed to him and removed the branch. Then he lifted the hermit and carried him into his hut.

The hermit opened his eyes. "Who are you? What are you doing here?" he asked.

"I am Govind, a poor villager. You might have seen me leading my cows to the fields—which I do almost everyday," said Govind.

"Right." The hermit sat in



silence. Govind understood that the hermit must have been in deep meditation when the cyclone came. That is why he had not known when the branch fell on him. Luckily he had not been harmed.

"I take your leave now, sir. Command me for anything and I am at your service."

"You are a very good man. Ask me for any three boons and they will be granted," said the hermit.

"Thank you, sir, can I return after consulting my wife?"

"You need not come again. Consult your wife and decide upon any three things you will

like to have. Then prostrate yourself to your deity and ask for them. They will be yours immediately," assured the hermit.

Govind went away happy. Back at home he told his wife about the hermit's offer.

"We are happy with whatever we have. What more do we need? However, we should not dishonour the hermit's sentiments. Ask for a stick, a broom and string of rope," suggested Poornima.

Govind prostrated himself to his deity and asked for those three things. They appeared there at once.

Poornima gave the stick to Govind, cut the rope into two strings and fastened the cows to the poles with them. She used the broomstick to sweep the house and the courtyard.

Next day, on his way to the meadow, Govind saw the hermit and bowed to him. "What boons did you obtain?" asked the hermit.

"We are blessed with a stick, a broom and a rope."

"What!" cried out the hermit. "Is that all you obtained out of the power I gave you? Could you not ask for something more

valuable?"

Humbly said Govind, "Sir, I did not think of that. I acted according to my wife's advice."

The hermit kept quiet. Govind hesitated and then asked, "Sir, do you think that we made a blunder? To be frank, we are quite content with what we got as boons. But if we have acted like fools, kindly pardon us. You offered us boons because you are noble. What can you do if we don't have luck?"

The hermit nodded and said, "Take me with you when you return home."

Two hours later the hermit was in Govind's house. Poorni-

ma received him with great humility and joy. "My daughter!" asked the hermit, "Why did you not ask for wealth or some such things as the boons?"

"O noble soul, your boons were meant to do us good, not bad. Had we grown wealthy, we would have stopped labouring. We would have then indulged in luxuries. Idleness and indulgence in luxuries often degrade men. What we have got instead of wealth are truly valuable. The stick that has come out of your compassion will make us fearless and protect us from any danger; the broom will not only keep the house clean, but also





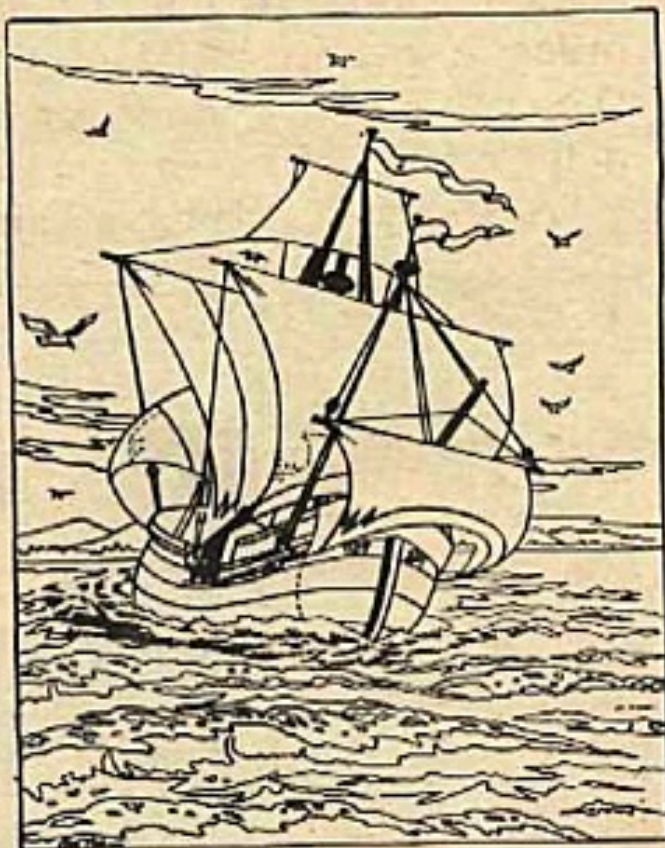
keep the atmosphere clean and pure. The rope that has come of the boon will not only secure for us the cows, but also prosperity. We shall never suffer for want of anything," said Poornima.

The hermit smiled. "I had

known" he said, "that I was coming to meet an enlightened soul. Fine. Live long."

The hermit got ready to leave. Govind and Poornima bowed down to him.

## WONDER WITH COLOURS



## WHO IS Mr. HOBSON?

"Who is Mr. Hobson, grandpa?"

"Mr. Hobson? I knew one Hobson who was the captain of a ship. But he died some twenty years ago," Grandpa reminisced.

"Oh no, grandpa. I am asking about one Mr. Hobson who must be father's friend. Father took the old car out. When I asked why he was struggling with that old thing, he simply said, 'Hobson's choice'. I wonder if he has a friend named Mr. Hobson who enjoys ride by that car!"

Grandpa laughed. "Is the new car in the garage?" he asked.

"It should be!" said Rajesh.

"No, It is not there. Uncle has taken that out," informed Reena.

"Since it is raining, it would have been inconvenient for your father to use the motor bike. Right?" asked Grandpa.

"Yes, grandpa."

"In other words, he had no choice. There was a certain Hobson in Cambridge in the 16th century. He managed a stable and gave horses on rent. But he will give them only in a certain order. If you are the third man to approach him, he will say, 'You can choose a horse, but you have to choose the third horse in the row!' So Hobson's choice came to mean no choice at all!"

"Amusing!" exclaimed Rajesh and Reena.



## PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



S. G. Seshagiri



V. Muthuraman

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs.50/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

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## PICKS FROM THE WISE

Never think that you already know all. However highly you are appraised, always have the courage to say to yourself — I am ignorant.

— *Ivan Pavlov*

Envy eats nothing but its own heart.

— *Proverb*

A critic is a legless man who teaches running.

— *Channing Pollock*



**We're all in it together  
for the fun of it,  
for the taste of it!**

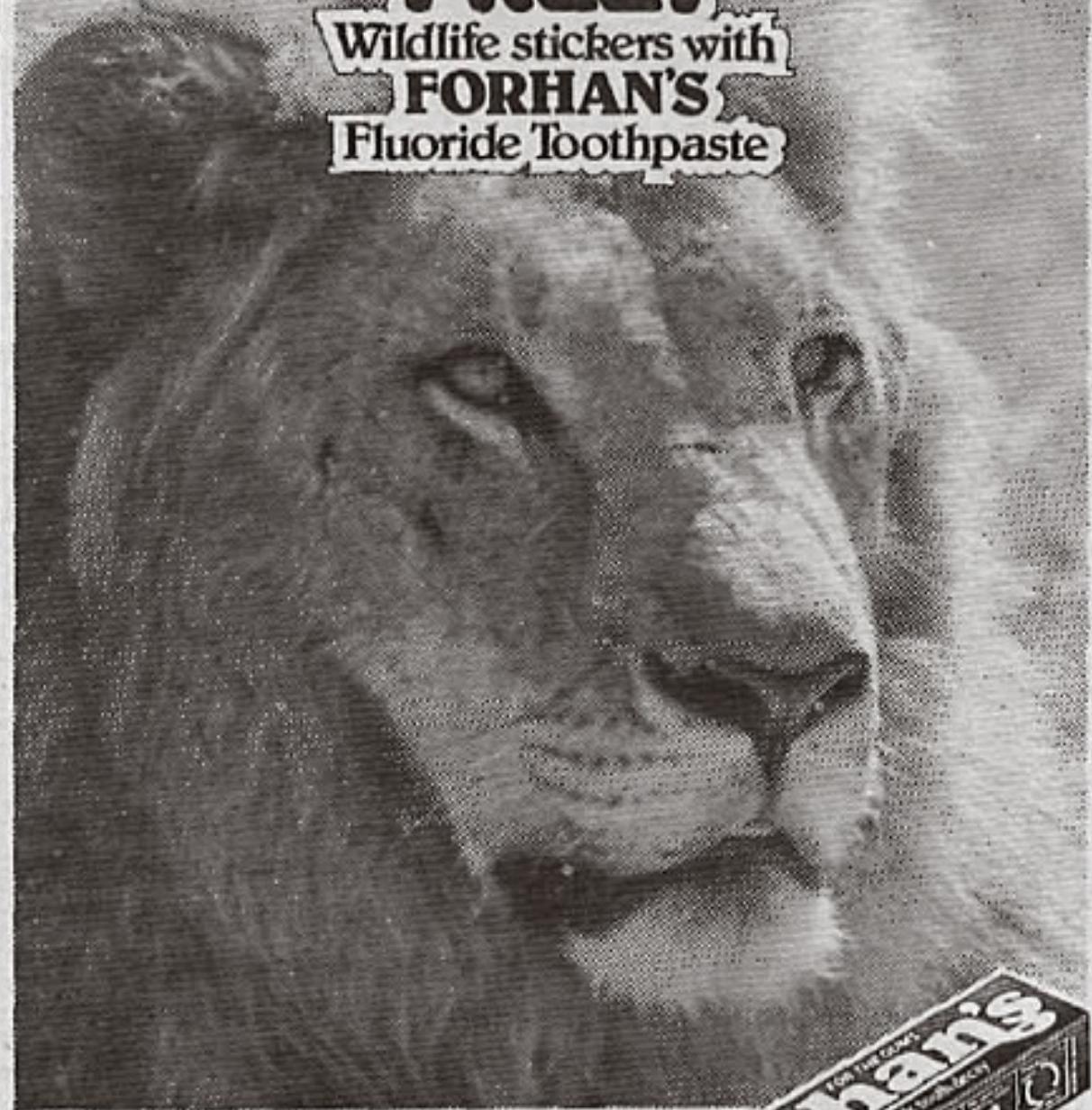


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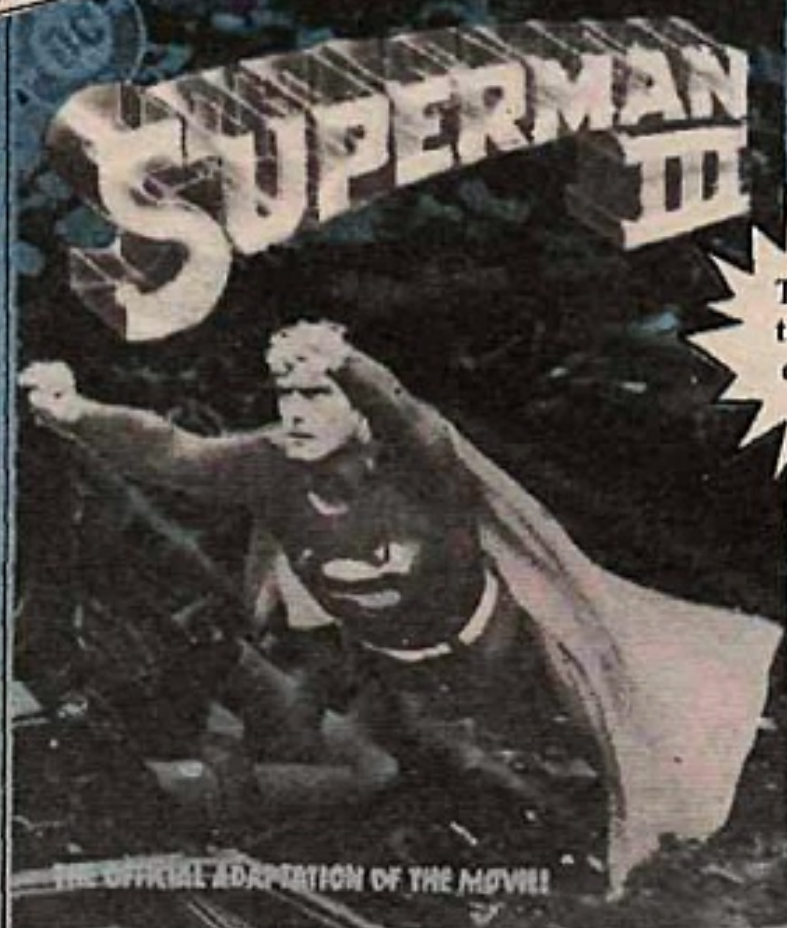
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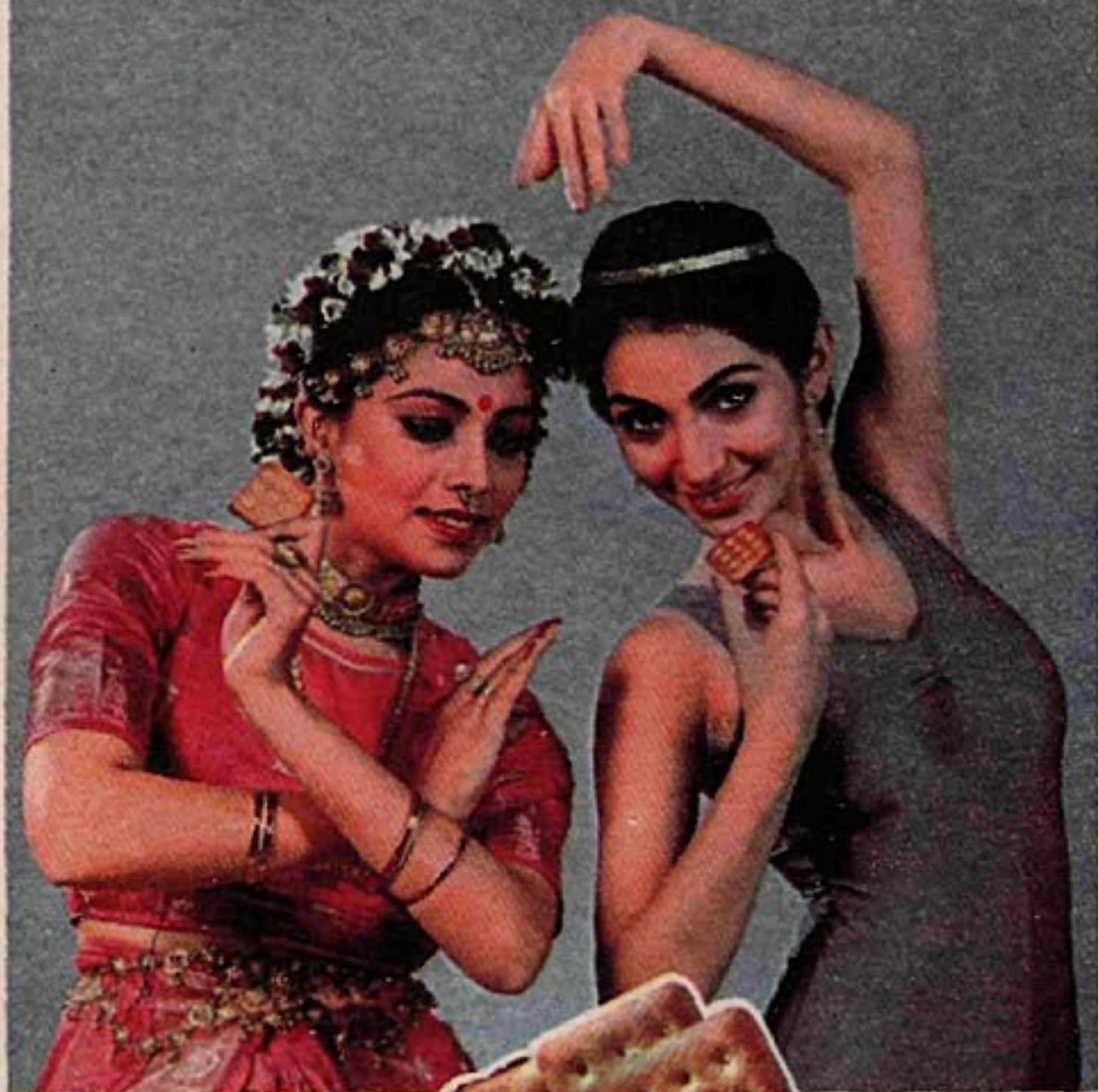
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